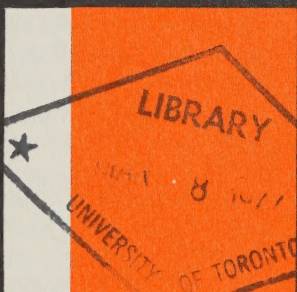
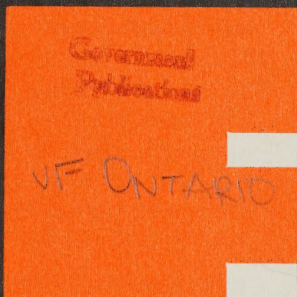


A  
Discussion  
Guide

# A Way Out. Along the Way

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Two films about child  
and family problems  
from the Ontario  
Ministry of Community  
and Social Services



## A Way Out/Along the Way

The most obvious thing about these two films is that they do not give answers. Neither film makes any blunt statements regarding the characters. It is up to the viewer to decide what the situation is and how he or she would respond in a similar situation. In this way, viewers are provoked into considering the questions of child well-being and unemployment.

These films will be of most value to your audience if there is a discussion of some sort afterwards. We have listed some questions that audiences have raised, to help you design your discussion.

Depending on the size of your audience, you may choose to have a general discussion, work in smaller groups with a discussion leader for each group, or perhaps have a session of role playing. Any method you use is good as long as people become involved.

## Additional Resources

Community resource staff you might wish to invite to assist discussion:

Children's Aid Societies or other child welfare agencies.

Educators or child psychologists.

Youth bureau of police department or Family Court personnel.

Representatives from the municipal, provincial/state, or federal governments in child or family welfare services.

Supervisors of child day care centres or nursery schools.

Other professionals in related fields concerned with families and children.

Caseworkers or other staff of municipal social services or welfare offices.

Places to Visit:

Children's Aid Societies or child welfare agencies.

Child day care centres or nursery schools.

Institutions or treatment centres for children.

Schools with courses in early childhood education.

Social services or welfare offices.

## A Way Out

22 minutes  
16 mm  
colour  
English and French

This film shows three situations involving children:

A young mother's disappointment and frustration leads to a moment of violence against her baby.

A little girl finds herself the loser in attempting to compete for her widowed father's love, with his new prospective wife.

Two boys from a broken home are adopted into a new family.

What will these children become? Damaged children retreat to the locked places in their minds. They need someone outside with the courage to reach in, to show them a way out. This film illustrates that without individual and community understanding and help, the potential of many children will be lost.

*A Way Out* is designed to be shown to social workers, professionals and lay people, foster and adoptive parents, and others interested in children.

Here are some questions that will start discussion:

The rights of people are mentioned. The young mother feels she has a right to have some fun; the woman who wants to marry Elizabeth's father wants happiness without complications. What rights do these people have? What rights do children have?

With reference to the young mother and Elizabeth's father, what is the situation of the single parent in today's society?

Is there such a thing as the “ideal family”? From the point of view of the children in the film what are their impressions of family and home?

How can we avoid saddling children with adult responsibilities while at the same time allowing them to mature naturally?

Should we (society) have solutions to problems, should we allow life to run into complications, can we prevent them, or lessen their impact? How can this be done?

Here are some general issues you could discuss:

What are the responsibilities of the average citizen and professionals regarding the care, protection and adoption of children?

If present methods employed by the community for the care, protection and adoption of children are not satisfactory, what are the alternatives?

There is an obvious need to protect children. They need time to be children and also need someone who is willing to understand and love them. Adults must learn to respect children as individuals, yet not over-protect them. How can this best be accomplished?

## Along the Way

24 minutes  
16 mm  
colour  
English and French

This film shows one day in the lives of two middle-class families in crisis.

First we see the family that adopted the two boys in *A Way Out*. The older boy, Phillip, steals money from his mother's purse and takes the afternoon off from school with a friend. The reactions of the mother, father, younger adopted brother, and natural son are shown.

Phillip's friend belongs to the second family in the film. The father in this family has been unemployed for a long time and his Unemployment Insurance has just run out. He announces to his family that they are now on welfare. The film shows his despair and the reactions of his wife and children to their situation.

*Along the Way* illustrates the problems arising from adoption and the consequences of unemployment. It is designed to be shown to parents, social workers, and other professional and lay people interested in these issues.

Here are some questions raised by the first family's situation:

Was the mother's reaction to Phillip's theft constructive? Was the father's? What would be the best way of handling Phillip's return?

Why was the mother so hesitant to contact the Children's Aid Society worker who placed the children with them?

Do you think Phillip is a juvenile delinquent? Should the parents have called the police?

What was the effect of this situation upon the family member?

Do you think this problem is typical of those that arise in family life? Are these problems inevitable?

Here are some questions raised by the second family's situation:

Does this family fit into any stereotypes of the average family on welfare?

How does unemployment affect a family? Is the husband's view of himself realistic? Phillip's father calls him slack. Do you feel he has tried hard enough to find work?

The husband seems to be isolating himself from his friends and family. What will be the result?

When he asks his wife what she would call him, if not a failure, she doesn't answer. How do you think she feels about him?

How do the relationships between the members of this family compare to those in Phillip's family? Do you think this family's problems are created by the situation of stress or the cause of stress? What do you think the outcome will be?

This family has been managing well on unemployment insurance. Assuming they will experience at least a 25 per cent drop in their income when they start receiving municipal welfare, what are the ways they can economize further? What effects could this have on family life? Who could help this family?

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A Way Out  
Along the Way

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Westminster Films Ltd.,  
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Ontario

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Social Services

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